



# Did You Know...?

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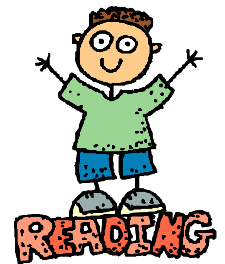
## What No Child Left Behind Says About Scientifically Based Instruction

Our children need instruction that is effective. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the Individual's with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004) requires schools to use instructional programs and practices that have been proven by scientifically based research. It is time to discard educational fads and move on to programs that have a proven record of success!

### What is scientifically based research?

Simply put, there must be reliable evidence that a program or practice works. NCLB requires experimental studies that are similar to the medical model of research used by scientists. These studies require many steps to prove a strong evidence of effectiveness. These steps include:

- Well designed trials that use random samples of the population
- Trials must also include a random "control group" (for comparison)
- Valid and reliable outcome measures
- Data on long-term outcomes
- Trials in more than one site of implementation



### How can families learn more about the programs that are research based?

Ask your school principal to plan a parent meeting for your school. Tell other families about the importance of using researched based materials. You can also visit these web sites.

The Promising Practices Network  
(<http://www.promisingpractices.net/>)

The What Works Clearinghouse  
(<http://www.w-w-c.org/>)

Briefs for families on evidence-based practices  
(<http://cecp.air.org/familybriefs/>)

IDEAS that work: Research in special education  
(<http://ericec.org/osep-sp.html>)

National Reading Panel  
([www.nationalreadingpanel.org/](http://www.nationalreadingpanel.org/))

### How can parents be involved in curriculum decisions for their child?

Visit with your child's teacher. Ask if your child is receiving research-based instruction. Find out how your school and district selects materials for the classroom. Educators must consider scientifically based research before choosing educational programs. New Mexico schools are required to involve families in decision-making as a part of their Educational Plan for Student Success (EPSS).

Regarding special education students, parents can propose the use of a methodology to the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team if the school's methodology has lacked reasonable benefit for their child.

## Make Informed Decisions. Ask the Right Questions!

Now, more than ever before, it is important for parents to ask questions and get answers that will help them be informed about the instructional programs and materials used in their child's classroom. When families have this information they can work with teachers and building administrators to insure that the materials in their school meet the standards set by No Child Left Behind and IDEA 2004 and the New Mexico Public Education Department. We can not just make do with what we have on hand or outdated programs or materials that do not have strong research to show that they are effective.

As a parent, ask questions and expect answers about the instructional programs selected for your child. Ask about staff training to implement these programs. Research based programs should have results to show for the questions below:



- Were there well designed trials in random samples of the population?
- Was this instructional program tested using trials that included a random “control group” that is compared to the test group for this program or material?
- Did the program show valid and reliable outcome measures and long term outcomes?
- Was the program and materials tested and implemented in more than one site?
- Has the program and materials been reviewed and approved by experts in the field? (Do the experts believe the practice will work?)

## Stay Informed. Review Your Child's Progress Reports.

If your child is responding to the instructional programs and materials used in the classroom, your child's progress reports (report cards) should show that they are learning the skills required for their grade level. If your child is not making progress or failing to “make the grade”, then it is important for you to schedule a conference with your child's teacher. Your child may need additional help like tutoring or other intervention strategies to provide the support he or she needs to succeed.

You or your child's teacher may want to consider making a referral to your school's Student Assistance Team (SAT). The New Mexico Public Education Department requires schools to use a three-tiered Response to Intervention (RTI) approach for students who are struggling to learn or may be a risk for failure in academic or behavior areas. The Student Assistance Team works with teachers and families to find targeted interventions and supports that will be effective for your child.

If your child is receiving special education services it is important that you know the instructional approaches that will be used to meet the goals in their child's Individualized Education Program (IEP). As you prepare for your child's IEP, review any progress reports that you have received and write down questions to ask during the IEP meeting that will show a true picture about your child's progress.

For more information on Student Assistance Teams, Response to Intervention or other topics, call Parents Reaching Out or visit our website: [www.parentsreachingout.org](http://www.parentsreachingout.org) or the NM Public Education Department website: <http://www.ped.state.nm.us/>

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